



Gilan



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Chapter 1 by Molly G

Gilan stood nervously in the small cabin with oak floors and dusted patterned carpets. Everything was clean and in place, from the gleaming kitchen pots to the vase of freshly picked flowers. This very pleasant cabin looked to be owned by a grandmotherly person maybe, but a ranger, in particular the grim Halt, no one would suspect.

Gilan was a handsome, courteous young man with an inviting smile. He was tall and slim in build, and never without his longsword at his side. Raised by one of the kingdom's most respected battle masters, David, he was trained in confidence, respect, manners and of course swordsmanship. In fact he had been taught by the legendary MacNeil.

Today he did not look or feel confident, but he had managed to be as polite as possible. He was waiting for his new mentor, Halt. Halt had just chosen Gilan after observing him for years. Gilan had most of the ranger traits- moving unseen (he was particularly good at this), using knives, tracking and the longbow (he was going to learn about this). But he also had one skill that was rare- the longsword. When he was chosen, Halt said that it would be a waste of time to give it up, so his training with the sword should be continued. "Hello Gilan" a deep voice directly

behind him said, breaking into his thoughts. Gilan jumped awkwardly and tried to regain his composure. Halt had a knack of eavesdropping on his thoughts. He thought he was there. Gilan glanced back at Halt's grim, bearded face. He wasn't really for what Halt had to say...

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Chapter 2 by Molly G

"We're leaving. NOW." Those three words were delivered with such quiet intensity, that Gilan merely nodded mutely, reading the note of worry in Halt's voice. Walking swiftly into his room, Gilan grabbed his few belongings and stuffed them into a bag.

He looked out, through the door at Halt pacing, and immediately knew something was wrong- when did Halt, /the Halt/ not know what to do? When did he pace?

Halt abruptly came to a stop as Gilan walked from his room. He pointed toward the stable, walking down from the oak verandah, and mounting his horse. He motioned for Gilan to do the same. Next to Halt's horse Aberlard, a beautiful but shaggy bay mare was saddled and ready to go. "Blaze!" Gilan ran over to his horse, stroking her neck. "She wasn't supposed to leave Bob's for another week." His questioning eyes turned to Halt.

"Considering current circumstances, the week had to be cut short."

"But what are the 'current circumstances'?"

An arrow whistled through the trees, burying itself in Gilan's saddle bag.

"Those circumstances"

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